

The loss of federal funding is a loss for America

We will do everything we can to protect the interests of faculty, students and staff



David Esquivel/UCLA

Dr. Julio Frenk

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Chancellor Julio Frenk today shared the following message with the campus community about developments related to federal research funding at UCLA.

Dear Bruin Community:

UCLA received a notice that the federal government, through its control of the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other agencies, is suspending certain research funding to UCLA. This is not only a loss to the researchers who rely on critical grants. It is a loss for Americans across the nation whose work, health, and future depend on the groundbreaking work we do.

To explain what I mean, I'd like to share a story. Thirteen years ago, Dr. Abbas Ardehali — a UCLA professor who leads groundbreaking research at the Heart and Lung Transplant Program in our Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery — changed the future of transplant medicine. He performed the first-ever lung transplant using the Organ Care System, a technology that keeps lungs breathing outside the body while they wait to be transplanted.

Dr. Ardehali had a simple but radical belief: that we could save more lives if we stopped transporting organs on ice in drugstore coolers and instead kept them alive. He was right. Today, he and his team continue to push boundaries in transplant medicine research — not just preserving organs, but reviving and repairing them. That work is saving lives every day for ordinary Americans, veterans and our dedicated servicemembers.

And the first person to benefit from Dr. Ardehali's breakthrough? Not a well-connected diplomat or tycoon, but a local grandfather and carpenter — someone who helped build the very Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center where his life was saved.

This story captures so much of what UCLA stands for: life-changing research, driven by compassion and shared with the world. What we discover and create here — with the help and support of grants such as those from the NSF and NIH — doesn't just stay within the walls of our labs or lecture halls. It reaches real people and real lives across this nation, often in the most transformative ways.

Great universities are connective, forging links across disciplines and communities, bridging divides with empathy and insight. They are impactful, translating discoveries into action, and ideals into progress. UCLA is a *truly* great university, as evidenced by the connections we create and lives we improve — not just of those who study on our campus, but of [people everywhere](#).

You can see that in so many parts of our research:

- Our planetary scientists, supported by the NSF and NASA, are searching for asteroids and other objects in space that could threaten Earth.
- Our Valley Fever Center, funded by the NIH, is working to better understand and treat the deadly invasive disease for which it is named.
- UCLA researchers helped create the Internet with support from the Department of Defense, and are now building new technologies that could fuel entire industries and help safeguard our soldiers.

This progress comes from a uniquely American idea: that public research universities, backed by federal support, can move our nation and all of civilization forward.

That is why the news we received is so deeply disappointing. With this decision, hundreds of grants may be lost, adversely affecting the lives and life-changing work of UCLA researchers, faculty and staff. In its notice to us, the federal government claims antisemitism and bias as the reasons. This far-reaching penalty of defunding life-saving research does *nothing* to address any alleged discrimination.

We share the goal of eradicating antisemitism across society. Antisemitism has no place on our campus, nor does any form of discrimination. We recognize that we can improve, and I am committed to doing so. Confronting the scourge of antisemitism effectively calls for thoughtfulness, commitment, and sustained effort — and UCLA has taken robust actions to make our campus a safe and welcoming environment for all students.

Earlier this year, we took concrete action by creating a new Office of Campus and Community Safety, instituting new policies to manage protests on campus, and taking decisive action for conduct that violates our policies.

We also launched an [Initiative to Combat Antisemitism](#) that is mobilizing our broad community to extinguish antisemitism completely and definitively. This is a standing initiative reporting directly to me.

As part of this initiative, UCLA is implementing recommendations of the Task Force to Combat Antisemitism and Anti-Israeli Bias. These include enhancing relevant training and education, improving the complaint system, ensuring enforcement of current and new laws and policies and cooperating with stakeholders.

These initiatives are deeply personal to me. My paternal grandparents left Germany in the 1930s with my father, who was 6 years old, and my aunt, who was 4. They were driven out of their home by an intolerable climate of antisemitism and hate. Members of my family who did not make that decision perished. My wife is the daughter of a Holocaust survivor, whose family was murdered in the concentration camps.

That history is part of what drew me to UCLA. Our university was founded on the principle that everyone, no matter their background, deserves the freedom to learn and use that knowledge to make this world a better place. With the support of our government at all levels, UCLA's research, innovation and education does that every day, benefiting Americans across the nation.

Let me be clear: Federal research grants are not handouts. Our researchers compete fiercely for these grants, proposing work that the government itself deems vital to the country's health, safety and economic future. Grants lead to medical breakthroughs, economic advancement, improved national security and global competitiveness — these are national priorities.

UCLA has an obligation to ensure that the resources entrusted to us by society add maximum value back to society.

For the past several months, our leadership team has been preparing for this situation and have developed comprehensive contingency plans. We will do everything we can to protect the interests of faculty, students and staff — and to defend our values and principles. With the support of the UC Board of Regents and the UC Office of the President, we are actively evaluating our best course of action. We will be in constant communication as decisions move forward.

Our motto is *Fiat Lux*: Let there be light.

I see that light all around us: In the patient that Dr. Ardehali treated who got a second chance to hold his grandchildren, in the students who come from all walks of life with big dreams and bold ideas, in the quiet determination of researchers working late into the night on solutions that could change everything.

Fiat Lux isn't just a phrase on our seal. It is a promise — to keep shining light where it is needed most.

Much is at stake, but UCLA has faced defining moments before. And we have always met them with courage, resilience and resolve.

We are One UCLA.

Julio Frenk
Chancellor